













The Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation

Adopted Early Action Strategy, 2001-2007















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EARLY ACTION STRATEGY: STARTING ON TOMMOROW TODAY

It has taken Washington state 30 years of population and economic growth to get to this transportation crisis. It will take time to get out of it. But we don't have to wait years to see progress. Nor should the public be asked to wait. One thing is for sure: Business as usual will not fix our transportation problems. We need efficiencies from administrative overhead to highway construction and transit investments.

The diversity of Washington state dictates that transportation needs will vary greatly throughout the state, from road-dependent rural areas to Puget Sound's complex multi-modal network. We must recognize these regional priorities in funding programs. Our recommendations call for a new way of doing business that will require both legislative and institutional change — both of which the public deserves and demands.

This state cannot afford to wait until all of the commission's recommended changes and efficiencies are in place. We must take action now. What we need is decisive leadership and quick actions on a balanced investment plan. The Blue Ribbon Commission is proposing an early investment strategy that if adopted will start us on the path to fix this state's transportation problems.

SUMMARY OF 20-YEAR

DESCRIPTION	20-YEAR ESTIMATED NEED**	CURRENTLY FUNDED
Total statewide transportation needs	\$150 billion	\$55 billion
Maintenance, preservation, safety, and retrofit		Funded portion of preservation and maintenance current system.
 State maintenance, preservation, safety and retrofit – all modes. 	\$19,278 (million)	
 Local and regional transit mainte- nance and preservation. 	\$20,286	
 Cities and counties maintenance, preservation and safety. 	\$27,832	
Optimization		
State Optimization and TDM	\$1,984	
Expansion and mobility		
State – all modes	\$54,799	
Local and regional transit expansion	\$15,359	
Cities and counties mobility	\$10,713	

^{**} As noted in the BRCT findings, more than 468 governmental entities have authority for transportation planning, funding, management, and construction in Washington state. Different jurisdictions and agencies do not share common definitions of needs and services objectives. The needs cited here were derived through a multi-year effort by many different data collection agencies. Dollars were converted to year 2000 dollars. The BRCT is recommending that consistent and improved data collection methods be put in place. This twenty-year need cost is therefore an estimate that should be updated and revised as improved data become available.

NEEDS AND INVESTMENTS

EARLY ACTION ITEMS	AVOIDED COSTS	YEAR 2008-2020 COSTS	
\$9-13 billion	\$40-50 billion	\$30-40 billion	
 Unfunded portion of maintenance preservation, and safety Restoration of transit and ferry service Optimization Expansion: roadway, transit, choices Cities and counties 	 De-prioritize projects Permit reform Efficiencies Unused local and transit district revenue authority Cost-benefit analysis Optimization planning Private sector provision of services Technology improvement Reduce demand 	 Unfunded portion of maintenance preservation, and safety Optimization Expansion Cities and counties 	

The detailed assumptions for this compilation of need are found in the investment strategies committee final report (Appendix B). To date, comments received from agencies are that their needs are under-reported. Given that the claimed need is subjective the BRCT has chosen to focus investments on effectiveness in meeting benchmark targets where results can be measured.

EARLY ACTION INVESTMENT GUIDELINES, 2001-2007 (SIX-YEAR PLAN)

This list provides direction for an early action investment strategy. Detailed budgets and cash flows to implement this direction should be developed by the legislature prior to authorizing funds.

The needs listed below are for new revenues. Existing federal, state, and local funding was already factored into the total six-year needs.

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	NEW STATE & REGIONAL REVENUE NEEDED (in millions)
Start efficiency measures.	Administration, operations, maintenance and project delivery savings. Pilot permit reforms; project delivery approaches.	Efficiency savings
Authorize governance changes.	Authorize regional transportation entities and funding tools.	Authorize regional revenue
Start fixing the worst chokepoints and make real progress on what was started.	Finish projects with complete and approved plans. Start on toughest problems.	\$3,000 - 4,000
Construct HOV lanes.	Finish projects with complete and approved plans.	\$750 - 1,000
Start now on the toughest problems.	Fund multi-modal corridor studies to make best investment choices.	\$225 - 300
Keep the ferries afloat.	Restore auto and passenger ferry service. Replace 4 auto ferries to meet Coast Guard regulations.	\$375 - 500
Expand choices, and start projects now to avoid future investment costs.	Restore and expand transit, passenger and freight rail, TDM, park & rides, smart growth, vanpools, bikes, pedestrian services and improvements, and special needs transit and rural mobility.	\$3,000 - 4,000
Use technology to do more with what we have.	Expand use of traffic service patrols. Synchronize traffic lights. Expand use of intelligent transportation systems.	\$40 - 50
Keep freight moving.	Provide partnership funding to solve freight delays on strategic corridors.	\$300- 400
Start now to make more informed choices at the local level.	Tie funding to efficiencies.	\$1,875 – 2,500
TOTAL INVESTMENT PACKAGE		\$9,565 - 12,750

NOTE: These investments should be subject to a proportionality principle: any reductions in the total package should be proportional by category as above, and by state/regional split.

REVENUE RECOMMENDATIONS — SIX-YEAR SCENARIO STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL SOURCES

(NUMBERS ARE ESTIMATES AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

SOURCES	-YEAR REVENUES (\$ MILLIONS)	YEAR-1 COST TO USER
STATEWIDE FLEXIBLE		
sales tax on commodity price of gas (up to price cap @ 6.5% on 80¢ 'rack'	price) 1,100	29
surcharge on wholesale value of transportation goods @ 2%	1,266	
\$20 transportation mitigation fee on passenger vehicles and non-commerci	al trucks 445	20
general fund transfer of sales tax on transportation construction	510	
SUBTOTAL ALL POTENTIAL STATEWIDE FLEXIBLE	SOURCES \$3,321	\$49
STATEWIDE RESTRICTED BY 18 TH AMENDMENT		
gas tax increase of ~6 cents	1,100	33
gross weight fee on all vehicles	1,330	40
truck surcharge (FMSIB)	150	
extend \$30 license fee to all vehicles	31	
ferry farebox recovery @ 80% in six years	95	
SUBTOTAL ALL POTENTIAL STATEWIDE RESTRICTE	ED FUNDS \$2,706	\$73
statewide bond proceeds (25-year bonds, 5.6% interest rate)	1,800	
(less debt service)	(271)	
efficiency savings (10%)	214	
STATEWIDE SU	BTOTAL \$7,770	\$122
REGIONAL AND LOCAL FLEXIBLE (illustration using Puget Sound as	example)	
regional sales tax @ 0.2%	687	
VMT charge @ 2 cents	1,340	
local option vehicle license fee @ \$50	373	
regional bond proceeds (25-year bonds, 5.7% interest rate)	1,500	
(less debt service)	(226)	
REGIONAL AND LOCAL FLEXIBLE (outside Puget Sound)		
local option vehicle license fee @ \$50	TBD	
local option high capacity transit sales tax @ 1%	TBD	
local option high capacity transit MVET @ 0.8%	TBD	
REGIONAL AND LOCAL SU	BTOTAL \$3,674	
TOTAL ALL SO	URCES \$11,444	

USE	COST (\$ MILLIONS)	
Fix chokepoints, make progress on work started	\$3,000 - 4,000	
Construct HOV lanes	\$750 - 1,000	
Start on tough problems	\$225 - 300	
Keep the ferries afloat	\$375 - 500	
Expand choices, avoid future costs	\$3,000 - 4,000	
Use technology	\$40 - 50	
Keep freight moving	\$300- 400	
Make more choices at local level	\$1,875 – 2,500	
TOTAL	\$9,565 - 12,750	

Begin with fixing the worst congestion chokepoints in the state and make real progress on what was started.

We know that each region of the state has highways and roads that we try to avoid during rush hour. Instead of hiding from the problem we recommend that we focus on it. Using work that WSDOT has already done to study these 'congestion chokepoints,' let's fund and begin building projects that are ready to go on the most congested highways of the state. These traffic solutions have already been through the cost-benefit analysis and priority listing review. The state began work on some of these projects in 1998 – then funding was cut with Initiative 695. The 2000 legislature began to fund some of these projects and the BRCT encourages the state to complete construction of those ready-to-go projects while we plan for more complex projects.

Following are some examples of chokepoints that should be fixed. The list below is for illustrative purposes only. These are the types of projects that *could* be done in the next six years. (A complete list of chokepoints in the state is included in the investment strategies committee final report, appendix A.)

Projects set for completion before end of 2007:

Examples to complete HOV lanes on congested corridors in Puget Sound

- ◆ Expand and improve HOV lanes on I-5 from Tukwila to the Pierce County line.
- ♦ Build direct HOV to HOV connections between I-90 and I-405.
- ♦ Extend HOV lanes on SR 167 to Auburn.
- Add HOV lanes to SR 99 in Shoreline.
- ♦ Reconstruct the I-5/SR 16 and I-5/38th Street interchanges in Tacoma and add HOV lanes to improve traffic flow.
- ◆ Improve SR 304 between the Bremerton Ferry Terminal and SR 3, including the addition of HOV lanes.
- ◆ Add HOV lanes on SR 16 between I-5 and the Tacoma Narrows Bridge.
- Widen and add HOV lanes to SR 900 from SE 78th Street to the I-90 interchange in Issaguah.

Examples of congestion relief for all vehicles in Puget Sound

- Complete congestion relief improvements on I-5 and SR 524 near Alderwood Mall.
- ◆ Provide congestion relief and interchange improvements at the junction of US 2 and SR 9 north of Snohomish.
- ♦ Connect SR 509 to I-5 in the SeaTac area to improve access to the airport and provide alternative access to south Seattle industrial areas.
- ♦ Convert SR 522 to a four-lane freeway from Paradise Lake Road to the Snohomish River.
- ◆ Continue the widening of Bothell-Everett Highway (SR 527) north from 132nd Street SE to 112th Street SE.
- ♦ Widen SR 9 to five lanes from 228th Street SE to 212th Street SE near Clearview.

- ♦ Widen SR 161 to five lanes from Jovita Boulevard to S 360th Street in the Milton-Federal Way area.
- ♦ Widen SR 524 to five lanes from 24th Avenue SW to SR 527 in the Lynnwood area.
- ♦ Construct an interchange on SR 167 in North Sumner.
- Construct a new interchange at SR 16 and Olympic Drive in Gig Harbor.

Examples that could improve traffic flow in western Washington (outside of Puget Sound)

- ♦ Add additional lane to I-5 between Salmon Creek and I-205 north of Vancouver.
- ♦ Widen SR 539 from two lanes to five from Tenmile Road to the Canadian border between Bellingham and Lynden.
- Improve SR 542 from Orleans Road to Hannegan Road in Bellingham.
- Construct truck climbing lanes and passing lanes on US 101 near Sequim, Blyn and Gardiner.
- Build a passing lane on SR 19 near SR 104 in the Hood Canal area.
- ◆ Add a lane to I-5 between Grand Mound (exit 88) and Maytown (exit 95), between Centralia and Tumwater.

Examples that could improve traffic flow in eastern Washington

- ♦ Improve north-south flow in East Wenatchee by improving the SR 28 from the US2/97 junction to 9th Street.
- Improve capacity on US 2 from the SR 28 intersection to Rocky Reach dam, north of Wenatchee.
- ◆ Add an additional lane to I-90 through the Spokane Valley from Argonne Road to the Idaho border.
- ♦ Construct an auxiliary lane on I-90 westbound from Vantage to Ryegrass Summit.
- Improve US 395 from the Spokane River to Francis Avenue in Spokane, and to the north.
- ♦ Widen SR 17 to four lanes from Pioneer Way to Stratford Road in Moses Lake.
- ♦ Widen US 12 to four lanes in the Attalia area east of Pasco.
- ♦ Construct additional lanes on SR 240 between I-182 and Columbia Center Boulevard interchange in the Tri-Cities.

Start now on the toughest problems.

Some of our most difficult problems will take more than six years time to resolve. The sooner we start, the sooner the fix. Place a spotlight on the tough decisions and complex issues to reduce traffic congestion. Provide funding for new technical tools such as multi-modal modeling to use in the analysis needed for making wise investment decisions. These tools will aid the ability of the state to have solutions ready for phase two investments beginning in the 2007-2009 biennium.

- ♦ Finish multi-modal corridor planning that has been started to make the best decisions on Trans-Lake Washington Project — SR 520 and I-405.
- Begin using most effective mix analysis and other investment strategy tools to screen all transpor-

- tation investments in all modes, as soon as possible.
- ♦ Get multi-modal corridor planning started on SR 2 from Everett to Stevens Pass, SR 9 through Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom counties, SR 395 in Spokane, and SR 101 on the Olympic Peninsula, to name a few examples.

Keep the ferries afloat.

♦ Restore auto and passenger service and replace four deficient auto ferries to meet Coast Guard requirements.

Expand choices and assure our transportation system continues to serve those who need it.

Offer travel options for the commuter, bus rider, and driver that can be put in place quickly:

- ♦ Build park and ride lots and get at least 15,000 new stalls in place by 2006.
- Provide transit service through state match of local sales tax for transit, to achieve a combination
 of restoring funds lost from Initiative 695, and expanding service to meet demand. Link matching
 funds to benchmarks and productivity.
- Ensure special needs and rural populations have transportation services.
- Restore the commute trip reduction (CTR) tax credit and expand the CTR program.
- Prioritize and fund vanpools.
- Provide incentive funds to encourage trip reduction.
- ♦ Encourage smart growth land use planning.
- ♦ Encourage flexible hours, telecommuting, car sharing and creative ways to reduce demand during peak hours.
- ♦ Bring rail service on line to meet commuter demand.
- Implement state rail plan recommendations to meet inter-city service goals.

Use technology to do more with what we have.

Fixing traffic jams is more than building new facilities – it also means being smarter with what we have: making greater use of traffic service patrols to clear accidents and prevent traffic jams. We recommend immediately synchronizing traffic lights on key routes to keep traffic flowing and using intelligent information systems such as real-time video, the internet, computer updates and electronic signage to alert drivers to conditions so they can alter routes and avoid delays.

- ♦ Improve traveler information systems, including cameras and traffic sensors, on I-5 from Everett to Bellingham
- ♦ Service Patrols can be added: I-5; I-90; SR 522 and SR 405

♦ Improve signals:

Bremerton SR303

Central Puget Sound: SR522; SR169; SR2; SR524; SR527

Centralia SR507

Mount Vernon SR20

Oak Harbor SR20

Pierce County SR 7 and SR 161

Spokane SR 27, I-90 Sullivan Road, SR 2

Keep freight moving.

Moving freight is critical to the health of the state. Building over passes and underpasses to separate rail lines from roads could make a huge difference. These projects reduce conflicts between general traffic and trucks and trains. These projects have met the cost-benefit analysis test and have funding partners to spread the cost and many can be underway in six years. Some examples are:

- ♦ South 228th Street near Kent
- ♦ East Marginal Way ramps in Seattle
- ♦ Spokane Street Viaduct Improvements in Seattle
- ◆ SR 519 Intermodal Access Royal Brougham/Alaskan Way near the sports stadiums in Seattle
- ♦ I-90 Cascade crossing additional lanes and snow sheds from Hyak to Easton
- ♦ Widening last section of SR 20 to I-5 near Mount Vernon
- ♦ Elimination of at-grade crossings in Yakima
- ♦ Columbia Center Boulevard in Kennewick

Start now to make more informed choices.

We need to be smarter about spending money at the local level. Right now there is no common way to track or evaluate investment, problems, or progress. Funding should be used to make progress in meeting BRCT goals and benchmarks. New funding for local governments should be used for the basic transportation infrastructure and should be tied to:

- ♦ Demonstrated progress in achieving efficiencies
- Sharing of resources to reduce duplication and save money
- ♦ Improved cost reporting systems
- ♦ Best use of pavement management system
- Greater use of cost-benefit analysis by all transportation agencies.

Start projects now to avoid future investment costs.

Estimates of our current transportation funding revenues show a significant shortage of funds, \$100 billion, if we want to meet our goals for 2020. The BRCT has identified some options that can help avoid future costs of up to \$50 billion but these options require further testing before they can be recommended for broad implementation. It is critical we conduct further analysis in the next biennium to help the state meet this shortfall. We recommend that the following studies start right away:

- Incentives to reduce SOV trips through smart growth in high growth corridors.
- ♦ Expansion of TDM tools for most congested corridors. Target demonstration projects for SR 520 and I-405 to help meet demand forecasts.
- Substantive permit reform.
- Pilot project for managed competition.
- Congestion pricing for new facilities and value pricing experiments.
- Look to the private sector to help meet demand for transportation services.

Continuously prioritize to get best results.

This package of recommendations is the first phase of a twenty-year plan. The BRCT recommends new transportation revenues be authorized for the next six years ranging from \$9-\$13 billion. Authorization for the second phase of transportation investment should take place in conjunction with a review of the progress in achieving this first stage. To ensure this money is spent wisely, the BRCT recommends these criteria to select projects for inclusion in the early action phase.

Priority should be given to:

- 1. Projects that meet BRCT investment strategies and benchmarks;
- 2. Continued maintenance and preservation of the state-wide system;
- 3. Projects in the most congested corridors;
- 4. Projects that are in transportation plans approved by April 2001;
- 5. Projects showing measurable results within six years;
- 6. Projects with permit approvals in place;
- 7. Ensuring the total package achieves a most effective mix of investments.

Expected Results

Ensure that progress is made toward reaching benchmarks and that results are evaluated for effectiveness before second phase funds are expended.

Interim results to be expected are:

- ♦ Demonstrated efficiencies in administration, operation, maintenance and project delivery.
- Meet air quality benchmark continuously.

- Prevent deterioration of existing transportation system.
- ◆ Assure continuous operation of ferry service beginning in 2001.
- Improve traffic flow on interstate system by removing accidents promptly.
- ♦ Improve traffic flow on 15 major arterials throughout the state by synchronizing traffic lights by end of year 2002.
- ♦ Double vanpool service to 3,000 vanpools by adding 1,500 vanpools in congested corridors by 2007.
- Open park and ride stalls in high-demand locations by end of year 2002.
- Construct approved HOV lanes in the most congested areas by end of 2007.
- ♦ Construct new lane miles of approved highways by end 2007.
- ◆ Construct 15 grade separations to improve freight mobility.
- ♦ Expand the CTR program coverage from 500,000 to 800,000 employees by June 30, 2003.
- ♦ Double to 37,500 the number of cars taken off the roads each weekday morning through trip reduction and smart growth programs, by 2007.
- Meet demand for transit trips in the most congested corridors by June 30, 2005.
- ♦ Increase passenger rail service between Vancouver,BC and Portland.
- ♦ Keep the public informed of delays and work schedules using all available technologies to provide real-time alerts about construction delays.

Set target dates to take action on the BRCT recommendations.

Act on efficiency and governance recommendations.

Immediate Adopt benchmarks and create Accountability Board.

Immediate Transportation Commission and Governor negotiate procedure to fill the vacancy for

the Secretary of Transportation.

Immediate Direct a thorough and independent performance review of WSDOT administrative

practices and staffing levels.

Immediate Begin substantive permit reforms for transportation projects.

Immediate Provide incentives to achieve construction and project delivery efficiencies.

Immediate Adopt incentives for all transportation agencies to reach benchmarks.

Immediate Authorize regional transportation authorities, including regional revenue measures.

2001-2003 Provide statewide revenue to regions for multi-modal regional priority setting using a

regional equity principle.

Immediate Adopt new formula for distribution of new roadway funds.

<u>Invest to hold steady on system condition benchmarks.</u>

Immediate Continue priority funding of highway maintenance, preservation, and safety.

Immediate Restore funding for auto and passenger ferry service and transit.

Immediate Continue current public transportation funding.

Make use of highway service patrols

Immediate Provide funding to cities, counties, and transit to ensure preservation and maintenance

of existing system.

Immediate Phase-out the use of studded tires or institute a surcharge to recognize cost of studded

tire damage.

Invest to optimize the system.

Immediate

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Immediate	Synchronize & update traffic lights on key corridors.
2001-2003	Restore the commute trip reduction (CTR) tax credit and expand the CTR program.
2001-2007	Establish incentives for smart growth in key corridors.
2001-2007	Establish incentives for innovative trip reduction programs.
2001-2007	Increase use of intelligent information systems.

2001-2003 Provide incentives to get park and ride lots to be sited and built.2001-2007 Build 15,000 new park and ride stalls in most congested areas.

Invest to make cost effective system expansions.

Immediate	Fund further planning to reduce congestion in key corridors.
Immediate	Create a multi-modal planning model for best decision-making.
2001-2007	Finish the HOV system.
2001-2007	Finish highway projects already started and approved.
2001-2007	Finish pedestrian & bicycle improvements started and approved.
2001-2007	Construct freight mobility projects and continue corridor improvement plans.
2001-2007	Conduct engineering for projects in congested corridors.
2001-2007	Bring additional cost-effective multi-modal transportation services on-line, vanpools, transit, rail, and other choices.

Adopt a revenue package.

Immediate Adopt a package of revenue measures to fund a comprehensive multi-modal set of investments, which, taken together with the recommended efficiency measures and reforms, will ensure a 20-year program of preserving, optimizing, and expanding the

state's transportation system.

TWENTY-YEAR

	2001-2007	2007-2013
INVESTMENTS	 Establish benchmarks & accountability board. Make governance changes: appointment of Secretary; regional authorities. Direct performance review of WSDOT. Permit reform. Provide incentives for construction, operations, and maintenance efficiencies. Allow innovative project delivery methods. Achieve administrative savings. Restore auto and passenger ferry service. Replace 4 auto ferries to meet Coast Guard requirements. Restore transit service. Use technology to optimize the system; traffic lights, ITS, patrols. Finish projects that are ready to go. Expand choices for TDM, transit, rail, bikes, pedestrians, smart growth, vanpools, park and ride stalls. Construct HOV lanes. Keep freight moving. Improve effectiveness of local government transportation investments. Start on toughest problems. Plan for phase 2 investments. 	 Monitor benchmarks. Evaluate performance of all transportation agencies in progress on benchmarks. Continuous efficiency improvements. Phase 2 permit reforms based on pilot program results. Phase 2 construction, operations, maintenance efficiencies based on phase 1 results. Phase 2 investments to meet benchmarks.
NEW REVENUE	 Link funding to efficiencies. Link funding to best practices. Simplify funding distributions. Seek fare box recovery target for ferries. Adopt regional equity principle. Authorize revenue package: \$9-13 billion. 	 Evaluate progress meeting benchmarks. Authorize next increment of phased investments.

TIMELINE

2013-2020	BENCHMARK RESULTS
 Monitor benchmarks. Evaluate performance of all transportation agencies in progress on benchmarks. Continuous efficiency improvements. Phase 3 permit reforms based on pilot program results. Phase 3 construction, operations, maintenance efficiencies based on phase 2 results. 	 Administrative costs as a percent of transportation spending at the state, county and city levels should improve to the median in the short-term and to the most efficient quartile nationally in the longer term. Washington's public transit agencies will achieve the median cost per vehicle revenue hour of peer group transit agencies. Improve operations, maintenance, and project delivery costs.
 Phase 3 investments to meet benchmarks. Evaluate progress meeting benchmarks. Authorize next increment of phased investments. 	 Zero percent of interstate highways, state routes, and local arterials in poor condition. Zero percent of bridges structurally deficient. Complete seismic safety retrofits of all Level 1 and Level 2 bridges. Traffic congestion on urban interstate highways will be no worse than the national mean. Delay per driver will be no worse than the national mean. Reduce overall hours of travel delay per person in congested corridors. Maintain vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita at 2000 levels. Increase non-auto share of work trips in urban centers or reverse the downward trend of non-auto share of work trips in urban centers. Traffic accidents will continue to decline. Freight movement and growth in trade-related freight movement should be accommodated on the transportation system. Maintain air quality at federally required levels. Ensure that transportation spending keeps pace with growth. Twenty-year revenue: \$50 billion. Twenty-year avoided costs: \$50 billion.



















